PROTECTING OUR KIDS FROM DISASTER

A Nonstructural Safety Checklist for Child Care Centers

Natural disasters such as fire, flood, earthquake, landslides, and various types of wind-related events occur everywhere. Moreover, everywhere they occur, they do unnecessary damage because of hazards that could have been eliminated. This checklist identifies some simple planning concepts and some common nonstructural hazards for child care centers. This is not an all-inclusive list, so feel free add to it as you feel necessary. Use this list to help make your center – ***Disaster Resistant***.

PLANNING / MITIGATION ITEM	YES	NO
PLANNING		
Does the center's disaster plan cover:		
Response?		
Recovery?		
Continuation of service?		
Have disaster response duties been assigned to selected staff (and back-ups) to include, as a minimum:		
First Aid?		
Search and Rescue?		
Fire Safety?		
Site Security?		
Evacuation?		
Has an off-site shelter been established in case an evacuation is necessary?		
Have parents and guardians been provided information on the center's disaster plan?		
Is there a single out-of-area telephone contact that parents can call to find out the status of their children in the event local telephone lines are inoperative and they can not get to the center?		

Sustaining Operations During Utility Failures		
Are there enough disaster supplies (food, water, medications, diapers, etc.) on hand to support the staff and children for at least three days?		
Is there a back-up electrical power supply? Does it have sufficient capacity (including fuel) to supply power for at least three days?		
Is there an alternate means of cooking food?		
Is a safe alternate heat source available to keep the children warm?		
STRUCTURAL CONSIDERATIONS		
Has an engineer performed a structural assessment of the building and made a determination how the building will perform in an earthquake or in high winds?		
Does the center have adequate insurance to cover the various hazards for which it is exposed (flood, earthquake, landslide, hurricane, etc.)?		
NONSTRUCTURAL CONSIDERATIONS		
Are escape routes free of obstructions?		
Do employees know the location of utility shut-off valves and do they have the knowledge, skills, and tools to shut off the:		
Gas?		
Water?		
Electrical service?		
Boiler?		
Has adequate emergency lighting been installed (stairs, bathrooms, exits, etc)?		
Are computers, associated hardware, and other electronic devices secured?		
Are appliances cabinets and shelves attached to the wall or braced by being anchored together?		
Are heavy or sharp items stored on the lowest shelves with ledge barriers?		
Are blocks and heavy objects stored on the lowest shelves?		
Are television sets, fish bowls and similar items restrained so they won't slide off?		
Has the glass in picture frames been replaced with plastic?		
Are pictures and other wall hangings attached to the wall with wire and closed screw eyes?		
Are chemicals such as bleach, paint thinner and cleaners securely stored so they won't spill?		
Are cribs located away from the tops of stairs and other places where rolling could endanger them or where heavy objects could fall on them?		
Are tall cribs anchored against tipping over?		

Are heavy furnishings or pieces of equipment latched or tethered to the wall?		
Are fire extinguishers secured so they won't fall?		
Are tall refrigerators attached to the wall or otherwise secured from tipping or rolling around?		
Is the facility generally free of materials that could become projectiles in an earthquake?		
Overhead Elements		
Are suspended ceilings secured to structural framing?		
Are suspended light fixtures attached to structural framing with safety cables?		
Do fluorescent lights have protective covers to keep broken glass pieces from scattering?		
Are battery-powered emergency lights secured to walls?		
Are blackboards or projection screens securely mounted to the wall or hung safely from the ceiling?		
Mechanical Equipment		
Is the water heater secured to wall studs (not just gypsum board) at the top and bottom?		
Does the water heater have flexible connectors, rather than rigid connectors?		
Do large sheet-metal heating-ventilating-air conditioning ducts have diagonal bracing above or enough vertical support straps to keep any section from falling if the ductwork separates into sections?		
Partitions		
Are lightweight panels, rather than shelving units or other tall furnishings, used to divide rooms?		
Are heavy or tall room dividers braced by inter-connecting them in L-shapes or zigzags?		
Do partitions have plastic or safety glass panels, rather than ordinary glass?		
Are partitions, which extend only to the suspended ceiling, supported by the structure above, especially if they are used to anchor heavy objects in the room?		
Windows		
Are windows and transoms made of safety glass or covered with a protective film?		
Are curtains kept closed or blinds kept lowered on windows that are not made of safety glass nor have protective film installed?		
In high wind prone areas, have impact-resistant windows and doors been installed, or are storm shutters, made out of plywood or metal, on hand to cover large windows and doors?		
Exteriors		
Are trees leaning or in poor health that might fall on the building?		
Is the street number of the center clearly and legibly visible from the roadway so that emergency vehicles will be able to locate the center easily?		

WILDFIRE MITIGATION		
Are there fuel breaks like driveways, lawns, and gravel walkways?		
Is there a "defensible space" of at least 100 feet around the building?		
Are the trees pruned six to ten feet from the ground to eliminate fuel ladders?		
Is there vegetation that might serve as a link between grass and treetops?		
Are trees spaced at least ten feet apart?		
Are native, fire-resistant vegetation and trees planted around the facility?		
Does the center have a well-maintained irrigation system?		
Is leaf clutter removed and the lawn mowed regularly?		
Is firewood stored away from the structure?		
Are pine needles and leaves cleaned regularly from the roof and gutters?		
Are the undersides of above ground decks enclosed with noncombustible material to prevent the buildup of leaves and debris?		

This checklist was adapted from the "Nonstructural Safety Checklist" developed by the Institute for Business & Home Safety (IBHS). Protecting Our Kids from Disasters is a national disaster preparedness program of the IBHS - an initiative of the insurance industry to reduce deaths, injuries, property damage, economic losses and human suffering caused by natural disasters.

To learn more, click - **http://www.ibhs.org/html/ibhs_projects/projects_childcare_questions.htm**

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